

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00230 251112Z

47

ACTION FMC-04

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1007

INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS TRIPOLI 0230

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRAN LY

SUBJECT: PORT CONGESTION, LIBYA

REF: STATE 031149 (NOTAL)

1. ECONOFF HAD SERIES MEETINGS WITH TRIPOLI SHIPPING AGENTS, DISCUSSED CONGESTION AND DELAYS IN LIBYAN PORTS. AGENTS ESTIMATED SHIPS EXPERIENCE AVERAGE 15-20 DAYS DELAY TRIPOLI, 7-10 DAYS DELAY BENGHAZI, NO DELAY TOBRUK. TUNISIAN PORTS NOT HEAVILY UTILIZED BECAUSE OF HIGH OVERLAND FREIGHT COSTS. AGENTS FURTHER ESTIMATED THAT CONGESTION WOULD REMAIN HEAVY AT LEAST UNTIL TRIPOLI PORT CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IS COMPLETED IN TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS.

2. AGENTS SAID LABOR PROBLEM SERIOUS. SUPPOSEDLY 13-MAN GANGS USUALLY HAVE FIVE MEN WORKING. IN SPITE OF TRIPLE PAY FOR SOME HOLIDAYS, UNABLE ATTRACT SUFFICIENT LABOR. SOME MEN WORK CONSECUTIVE SHIFTS, 16-HOUR DAYS, AND ARE TOO TIRED TO BE EFFICIENT.

3. LIBYAN PORTS NOT ATTRACTIVE TO SHIPPERS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO RPT NO EXPORTS. DELAYS HERE MAKE MUDDLE OF SCHEDULES AND CONTRACTED DISCHARGE AND LOADINGS PORTS IN NEARBY COUNTRIES.

4. SOME AGENTS OBJECTED TO HIGHER SURCHARGES, NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE UNWARRANTED, BUT BECAUSE THEY WILL

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PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00230 251112Z

BE RESENTED. THEY SUGGESTED THAT AN INCREASE IN

FREIGHT RATES WOULD BE BETTER BECAUSE, IF THE PORTS ADMINISTRATION SEES HIGHER SURCHARGES LISTED ON MANIFESTS, IT WILL DELIBERATELY DELAY THE SHIP'S ENTRY TO THE DOCKS.

5. AGENTS ADMITTED THAT SOME SHIPS IN TRIPOLI MUST WAIT UP TO 30 DAYS TO COME ALONGSIDE DOCKS. WHEN ASKED HOW PRIORITY IS ESTABLISHED, AGENTS STATED THAT COMMODITY PRIORITY IS ESTABLISHED BY TYPE OF CARGO AND HOW BADLY IT IS NEEDED IN LIBYAN MARKET. RIGHT NOW HIGHEST PRIORITY GIVEN FOODSTUFFS, ESPECIALLY PERISHABLES; BUILDING MATERIAL, WHEAT HAVE LOWER PRIORITY.

6. IN ADDITION LABOR PROBLEMS, AGENTS LISTED LACK WAREHOUSE SPACE, INLAND TRANSPORT SHORTAGES.
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